Who Is Mystery Man in JFK 'Plot' Probe?

By ROBERT GRUENBERG

New Orleans, March 11 (CDN)—When the celebrated hearing into the John F. Kennedy assassination "conspiracy" begins here Tuesday, the big question will be "Who?"

Who is the confidential informant upon whom Jim Garrison, the free-swinging district attorney, has staked his bombshell case, his reputation and political career?

Garrison's aides have promised to produce the informant, a virtual requirement laid down earlier this week by District Criminal Judge Bernard J. Bagert Sr.

The informant, they said, is not a man in jail—where informants usually are kept. Indeed, they hinted, he doesn't even have a police guard.

* * *

Garrison may for the first time give the public a look at some of the strangest witnesses assembled in a court of law in a long time.

Through many of the witnesses known to have talked to Garrison there runs threads of mystery and unusual personality characteristics, if not actual neuroses.

Even the supporting cast of Garrison's investigators is one right out of the detective stories. They are "hero" types, tall, handsome, athletic, $1-a-year men in private detective work.

Also, for the first time, there may be a complete airing of the peculiar set of circumstances, the coincidences and the rest, which have led many to conclude that the Kennedy murder—if not the work of a single, almost demented man—had many angles unexplored by the Warren Commission.

Sharing center stage with Garrison in the courtroom will be Clay L. Shaw, 54, a white-haired member of top-drawer New Orleans business circles.

Shaw retired in 1965 after 18 successful years as managing director of the International Trade Mart. He lives in the old French Quarter in a tastefully restored carriage house, one of 13 historic homes he had similarly rebuilt.

Hhe has been decorated by the U. S., France and Belgium for his services in World War II.

A playwright, he is widely traveled. It was on one of his trips with Mayor DeLesseps Morrison, friends said, that he was introduced to President Kennedy. Morrison was killed in a plane crash in Mexico in 1964.

Shaw is the man Garrison has accused as "participating in a conspiracy to kill John F. Kennedy."

Two other members of the plot, Garrison said, were Lee Harvey Oswald and the late David W. Ferrie, 48, a part-time legal investigator who formerly was a commercial air line pilot.

The plotting took place, according to Garrison, in Ferrie's shabby, cluttered apartment in New Orleans—where he was found dead Feb. 22.

Shaw after his arrest told a press conference that he loved President Kennedy, never knew Oswald or Ferrie and never had been in Ferrie's flat.

And he said he did not use the name, "Clay Bertrand." Garrison says both men are the same.

* * *

The mysterious "Clay Bertrand" telephoned assistant District Attorney Dean A. Andrews Jr., in adjacent Jeffersion Parish, on the Friday of the assassination, or Saturday, and asked him to represent Lee Harvey Oswald, Andrews told the Warren Commission.

Shaw's name does not appear in the index of the Warren Report. However, Attorney General Ramsey Clark in Washington—after Shaw's arrest—told reporters that Shaw was investigated and "cleared."

"Bertrand's" name does appear in the report in some detail. He is the mysterious "voice on the telephone" testified Andrews, who used the vernacular of the bars and the French Quarter, in occasional calls in 1963 asking Andrews to defend youths arrested on homosexual charges. Andrews is unable, he said, to identify Shaw as "Bertrand."